TIMEX SINCLAIR

MORE TIMEX SINCLAIR

by Michael O'Brien

Without the intricate thread of newsletters, BBS SIGs and users groups that tie us together, the destiny of our computers would have long been decided. It is precisely this elaborate network that weaves us all together.

This month I would like to focus on the emergence of SNUG (Sinclair North American Users Group). From as far away as Australia, inquiries have come for information on SNUG; what is it, how can I belong?

Former Winterfest '88 officials met to discuss the purpose and intentions of the organization. Specifically, first that SNUG would indeed become a reality, and secondly the objectives of this group. The primary objective of SNUG is to better facilitate communication between existing Sinclair users groups and the Sinclair user. No one better than I know that there are hundreds of users out there still acquiring Sinclair computers, with seemingly no where to turn. There still is a tremendous amount of confusion out on the front lines.

SNUG was designed to provide a single source of information about Sinclair computers, and to better direct specific inquiries. The best way to accomplish this was to first seek and acquire a definitive collection of information such as; a list of all current/active users groups, vendors, BBSs and or BBSs with TS SIGs, establish and maintain a complete public domain software collection, newsletter and document library, and the establishment of a database of known hardware/software problems with available solutions.

A very capable Mel Nathanson assumed the Chairperson Pro-tem position, Mary Lynn Johnson acts as Vice-Chairperson Pro-tem, Daryl Stec as Treasurer Pro-tem and Will Adams as Librarian Pro-tem.

Again, SNUG is not in competition with established users groups, but merely compliments them with the clout of a group with national perspective. Quoting a SNUG news release, "At this point we want to point out we are not in competition with currently established users groups." "The idea has always been, and always will be to support these groups, and not detract from them." "They are the backbone of the community." "We are here to help them, and in turn help themselves." "Without them we would have a very difficult road indeed." "This does not preclude the individual user, isolated without ready access to a users group." "Though we hope to put him/her with all the users groups, or point them to a local users group nearby."

SNUGs long term goals include forums designed to tackle the enormous software/hardware incompatibilities confronting us. Also, establishing firm contacts with users groups abroad for exchange of public domain software, investigating the release into public domain of information held by authorized patent holders of Sinclair technology, and to contact software house and cottage industries to release into public domain their rights and interests in programs no longer offered on the market.

Offers have already been made by long established users groups, to contribute their existing libraries into the common SNUG library, for access by all. A complete listing of all Sinclair public domain programs is forthcoming from SNUG.

Frank Davis has been appointed the head librarian, and Tim Ward has assumed the assistant librarian position. These are two very capable and dedicated people.

SNUGs second press release announced the established formats of the library.

ZX-81/TS-1000/TS-1500—Cassette & Larken DOS

Spectrum/TS-2068—Cassette, A&J Microdrive, Wafadrive, Aerco, Larken, Oliger DOS, CP/M, Portugal Timex, Zebra * Ramex SPDOS.

QL—Microdrive & floppy disk.

Cambridge Z-88—Software—Eprom.

As you can see, all formats are available, and with eager and talented people like Tim Ward, Paul Holmgren, Tony Willing, Andy Hardesky, Pete Fischer, Willie Jones, Tim Stoddard and Gary Lessenberry hot on the trail, I am excited! These truly are the same faces that you have seen popping up, time and time again throughout the years, and their names have become synonymous with commitment.

With firm goals and talented people in place, SNUG now needs your commitment. Join! I highly recommend this organization. To date, this has been the highest level of commitment from a huge pool of innovators. The scope and accomplishments will be staggering.

Memberships are $12 for individuals, and $15 for users groups. Again, to quote their most recent press release, "We anticipate your joining the organization." "There is something special about a person willing to take a chance on an idea, that has nothing immediately tangible for their hard earned money." "It takes a person with vision and courage." "Ideas with as much scope as the one we are attempting, are difficult enough to pull off without your help." "Be proud, there are not many of you out there."

Contact SNUG at 7515 Arbordale Drive, Port Richey, Florida. 34668. (813)-863-5552.

Amstrad

While on the subject of users groups, I'm glad that I finally have the time this month to mention AUGUST. (Amstrad Users Group United States Territories). Begun by Harley Ristad, a retired computer engineer for IBM, his name has also become synonymous with contributions. Harley began the group as "therapy," a creative outlet

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► TI FORUM

TI-99/4A, including public domain and fairware offerings. As you might imagine, this is quite a task.

Anyone with fairware or public domain adventures is encouraged to drop a line to Schmitt in care of the PUG.

Some Tips To Newsletter Editors

interest materials. Focus as little as possible on the business meeting, treasurer's report, time and place of next meeting, etc.

* Add some graphics. The 99 (with MAX-RLE, GRAPH-X, TI-ARTIST, CONVERT, PICTURE IT, PICASSO, CSGD, etc.) has a wealth of

them to write about it. Or, because you are editor or write, encourage them to demonstrate it and you write it up for the newsletter.

* Look through other newsletters. If an article interests you, it will probably interest your readers.

pen is that you get disconnected, and you can always get reconnected. As for the SysOp, I have never met one yet that wasn't grateful to have you on his board. You are his reason for existing. He is more than willing to answer any questions you might have, and will guide you, to the best of his ability, through the first fears of communicating with a BBS (Bulletin Board System). From that point on, it's all downhill, and lots of fun. It can also be as informative as you want it to be.

If you can't get past your fears long enough to experiment, get someone who has used his modem to come to your house and tell you what to do as you go through the steps. Don't watch him do it! Do it yourself. That way it sticks better, and each time you do it, it gets a little easier. Take it from one who knows. I had my modem for six months before I could work up enough courage to use the darn thing! Now I wonder why it took me so long! Fear of the

If you are just starting out, one of the local Boards is an excellent place to start. For no fee at all, except your participation, you can get lots of useful information, and as much socializing as you could wish. The people who use the boards are very helpful and understanding, especially to those who are still feeling their way around. Ask a question and you will be sure to get an answer. Ask for help and it's right there. Along with all of that, it's lots of fun.

It came to my attention a while back, that a number of our ECAUG club members were having trouble with their modems. When logging on to a couple of local bulletin boards, they were not able to stay connected. The bulletin board disconnected a few seconds after being connected. We discovered, however, that not all the modems were having the problem.

One modem connected, another one on the same computer didn't. The

about five seconds, and press it again. Hit the RETURN key, and you should then be able to get on with your business on the board and stay connected! Don't ask me why it works, but it seems to!

These instructions apply only to the Coleco Adam modem that fits inside of your CPU. I understand that these modems are getting very scarce, so future owners of modems won't have to worry about not connecting to the bulletin board of their choice. Unless someone starts to manufacture the Adam modem again, they will only have to worry about which modem to buy. There seem to be several out there for us to choose from. Since I haven't tried any of them, you're on your own as far as choosing which one to try.

If BBSs were to fall out of favor for whatever reason, the world of computing would drastically change for the worse. I don't think a lot of Adam users realize just how important these boards are to our survival.

Bulletin Boards, 221B Baker Street and The Hot Muddy Duck, carry Adam areas on their BBS, and belong to a network that links their boards up with a series of boards from here to Canada. I am sure there are bulletin boards in your area that do the same. In this way, we are able to get the information we need quickly and inexpensively. Have you any idea how much it would cost each of us to log on to boards as far away as Canada to get the support we are currently getting for free? Plus, we all get that information, not just the ones that log on to get it. We are able to reach out and make friends with other Adam users across, and up and down the whole nation and Canada. Ask yourself how much that is worth to you. I know it is invaluable to me!

I recently discovered that in order to stay on the network, the Adam area had to have a Moderator to police the Adam network. Bill Freads, the

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he lost at retirement, and because he finds satisfaction in helping others.

At the time of writing, AUGUST has more than 135 members, and is listed in the users group section, here in *Computer Shopper*. The sole purpose of the group is to provide support for owners of the PCW-8256 & PCW 8512. Due to the 3" disk format and CP/M operating system, many users have questions and no place to turn.

Enter Harley. He regularly takes phone call questions until midnight Pacific, initiates up/downloads by appointment, and is always there with a helping hand.

Joining the Amstrad Users Group, is as simple as sending one dollar (Voluntary), to 12741 Matteson Ave, #3, Los Angeles, CA. 90066. 213-397-7981 for application.

Amtrad users, much like their Sinclair counterparts, often have difficulty finding soft/hardware. I have compiled a brief list of dealers and users groups from the United States and abroad, for you. Have fun!

Amstrad PCW Users SIG. Bimonthly newsletter. $1 for sample to Al Warsh, 12472 Reche Canyon Rd #93, Colton, CA. 92324.

Send disk and $2 for sample public domain software. PCW FILE (Chris Bryant) 11 Havenview Rd, Seaton, Devon. EX12 2PF, England. U.K. Member is England, France, Sweden, Russia, USA etc. PD software available. Disk and 2.5 pounds. Phone 011 + 44 + 297 + 20456

Advantage Users Group

(J.J. Berrey) 56 Bath Road, Cheltanham, GL53 7HJ, England, U.K. Phone 011 + 44 + 242 + 224340. PD software available for 8 pounds plus disk.

Elliam Associates, 6101 Kentland Ave, Woodland Hills, CA. 91367. (818)-348-4278. Transfer CP/M from any format to 3" disk. Serial/Parallel interface $47.

Sinotech LTD. 25975 Diamond Lake Road #105, Mundelein, IL. 60060. (312)-566-0504.

S.O.S. CP/M software, hardware, books. 615 Academy Drive, Northbrook, IL. 60062. (800)-435-7729. Ribbons. Radio Shack DMP-130: part #26-1238. 3 for $12.95.

Greentree Computers. BM44 V, $5.60 each. (800)-367-2897

Disks. 10 Maxell 3" CF-2. Precision Data Products. (800)-258-0028.

Greentree Computers. 10 for $39.30 (800)-367-2897

Memory Chips. XX41256-XX. Check best prices here in *Computer Shopper*.

Amstrad Customer Service. Brentwood House, 169 Kings Road, Brentwood, Essex. CM14 4EF. Phone 011 + 44 + 277 + 230222. USA 1915 Westridge Drive, Irving, TX. 75038 (214)-518-0668. or call VIDCO (800)-237-3116.

TS-2068

A few final words this month on the TS-2068. John McMichael of Laramie, WY wrote with information on new software that he has developed for the TS-2068 allowing full screen color screen dumps to the Okimate color printers. Using a simple Commodore serial port emulator circuit, originally developed and sold as the interface between a TS/2068 and Commodore 1520 printer, was tested and found to work as an interface to an Okimate 20 using a Commodore Plug n Print cartridge. John has developed software for the Okimate 20 I/F for full color and B&W screen dumps. To enable customized Mscript versions 5 or 5.2 to print to the Okimate 20, and to facilitate LPRINTing and LListing.

John also has developed an interactive SCREEN$ to plotter transfer utility for the TS/2068 and several other very interesting software developments.

Direct all inquiries to John McMichael, 1710 Palmer Drive., Laramie, WY. 82070 (307)-742-4530. ●